

THE MINOR SEMINARY APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS VOCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIGHT OF SOME CURRENT
THEORIES OF VOCATIONAL CHOICE

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

Guidance counselors are very much aware of the importance of assisting students in making a vocational choice. Choosing the right vocation can mean success and happiness for the student; choosing the wrong vocation can result in a life-long series of failures and frustration.

Choosing a vocation seems to be more of a problem today than in the past. With the vast increase in the numbers and kinds of careers possible, the task of narrowing one's choice to a specific career demands even greater determination to exclude all others. It has become increasingly more common for students to feel that "if I wait longer to make my decision, perhaps I will learn about something else that I am more fitted for and which will, therefore, be more satisfying to me."

In addition to the increase in the number of possible choices, many of the careers and jobs open to young people today require longer and more specialized training than in the past. This necessitates a decision to begin training as early as possible. The amount of time and effort required demands great determination. The decision must be made early in life and it must be firm enough for one to resist the temptation to change after the specialized training is under way.

There are further problems involved in the choice of a religious vocation in the Catholic Church. The ever-increasing demands for professional skills being made on religious personnel necessitate long and intense preparation. Yet, the kind of commitment to one's vocation required of the person dedicating his life to a religious role in the Catholic Church is probably more final than that required of any other vocation.

One very common means of filling the need for priests, is the minor seminary approach to vocational development. Young boys are recruited at the ninth grade level to enter a seminary high school, which is programmed for the purpose of educating them and in other ways preparing them to serve the Church as priests. Although minor seminaries differ widely in the degree of commitment to the choice of the priesthood demanded of applicants, it may be safely said that they universally do not accept applicants who have no intention of becoming priests. The educational and guidance programs of these seminaries is oriented toward young men who will be priests in the future. The standards set up for these students to meet are those dictated by the criterion: is he mentally, morally and emotionally capable of fulfilling the demands of the priesthood? A seminarian who does not measure up is judged unfit for the priesthood and is advised to transfer to a "regular" high school. Implied in these criteria of initial and continued acceptance into the seminary is a commitment to the choice of the priesthood as his vocation. This choice implies the exclusion of many other possible choices.

A young person who chooses the priesthood, according to the present policy of the Catholic Church, by that very fact chooses also to live a celibate life. Thus the choice of a career in the service of the Church includes also the choice not to marry. The training programs of minor seminaries are affected by the implications of this choice.

In recent years, this approach to the recruitment and development of priestly vocations has been called into question. The number of boys attending minor seminaries has, almost universally, been on the decline. The "perseverance rate", that is, the percentage of boys who

enter the seminary at this age and continue on to become ordained priests, has for some time hovered around the ten per cent mark in the United States. Many priests engaged in vocational counseling for the priesthood have questioned this approach. An increasing number of parents are refusing to allow their sons to enter the seminary at this age because they do not feel they are mature enough to make this decision.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this report is to study the minor seminary approach to preparation for and commitment to a priestly vocation in the Catholic Church in the light of some current theories of vocational choice. On the basis of this study, suggestions will be made how the selected theories may affect religious vocational counseling.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Hoppeck writes: "Not for many years, if ever, will we have enough research evidence to confirm or contradict each of the many theories of vocational choice and development already proposed, not to mention the new theories not yet devised."¹ This opinion seems to be shared by all of the authors reviewed. The research that has been done in the field of vocational choice suffers from two principal limitations: inadequate predictive value and limited sampling of population. This report, based on selected theories which are the outcome of such research projects, shares the same limitations.

¹Robert Hoppeck, Occupational Information (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), p. 110.

Not all of the current theories of vocational choice will be reviewed in this report. Those theories have been selected which seemed generally recognized as significant by authorities in the field today and which seemed apropos the problem of religious vocational choice.

Implied in the discussion of the age at which vocational choice is made are theories of adolescent personality development. This report will be delimited to specific theories. To examine the validity of personality theories and to review the varying opinions of psychologists concerning adolescence is beyond the scope of this report. The theories referred to were those which had some relevance to the problem of vocational choice.

The application of these theories is further delimited to the problem of religious vocational choice in the Catholic Church, and to the priesthood in particular.

There is no attempt in this report to examine the theology of religious vocational choice. Although every choice to serve God in the Church undoubtedly has theological implications, it seemed advantageous to abstract from those implications and to consider only the psychological implications. Perhaps this will serve to emphasize those questions which are exclusively in the realm of theology in regard to the problem of religious vocational choice.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Developmental Theories. The term "developmental", as used in this report, is a general term referring to the theories of those researchers who do not perceive vocational choice as a single choice, but

as a series of choices which occur as an individual passes through various stages in the process of achieving vocational maturity.

Minor Seminary. The title "minor seminary" is given to a high school--grades nine through twelve--whose exclusive purpose is to prepare young men for the priesthood in the Catholic Church.

Ordination to the Priesthood. "Ordination" means the conferring of the Sacrament of Holy Orders by a bishop which establishes a man in the state of the priesthood and confers on him the powers of the priesthood. In the sacramental theology of the Catholic Church this is irreversible. The notion of a "temporary priesthood" is not acceptable. Thus, the choice made to be ordained is the choice to be a priest forever.

Celibacy. "Celibacy" is the state of life of a person who remains unmarried throughout life. The choice of a religious vocation in the Catholic Church involves, at the present time, also the choice not to marry.

Religious Vocation. By "religious vocation" is meant the choice of a life of service in the Catholic Church in the role of an ordained priest or in the role of a "brother" or "sister" who dedicates his or her life by perpetual vows to living in a religious community and to serving the Church in a specific capacity as teacher, nurse, missionary, and the like. Although most of what will be said in this report can be applied to all of these roles, attention is directed more specifically to the religious vocation of the priesthood.

II. REVIEW OF SELECTED THEORIES

This report will review only those theories of vocational choice which seem generally recognized as significant by recent writers and

which were deemed apropos the problem of religious vocational choice. The theories may be classified under the headings of career pattern theory, self-concept theory, and motivational theory. This is not to imply that all three elements are not found in each theory. It serves, rather, to indicate the major emphasis of each theory.

CAREER PATTERN THEORY

The career pattern theories are based on the notion of "life stages". The term "career pattern" is borrowed from the field of sociology. The psychological term "life stages" refers to "an analysis of life histories in which the major events and concerns group themselves and vary from one stage of life to another, justifying the classification of life into a sequence of characteristic stages".¹ The work of Charlotte Buehler in Austria has influenced the formation of career pattern approaches to a theory of occupational choice.² Her work consisted of the psychological analysis of the life histories of a number of aged people and of the biographies of well-known persons. Her study led to the delineation of a series of five life-stages, each characterized by adjustments an individual must make at that stage. The five stages described by Buehler are: (1) growth, from conception until the age of fourteen; (2) exploration, from age fourteen until about age twenty-five; (3) establishment, from age twenty-five until age forty-five; (4) maintenance, from age forty-five until approximately age sixty-five; and (5) decline, age sixty-five and older.

¹Donald E. Super, The Psychology of Careers (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 71.

²Charlotte Buehler, Der Menschliche Lebenslauf als Psychologisches Problem (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1933).

Two American theories of vocational choice based on life stages appeared in 1951. One was by a Columbia University research group composed of Eli Ginzberg, W. S. Ginsburg, Sidney Axelrad and J. L. Herma.¹ The other was by two industrial psychologists, D. C. Miller and W. H. Form.² Of the two, that of Ginzberg and his associates has had more influence on subsequent research.

Ginzberg and Associates

Ginzberg and his associates set out "in search of a general theory" of vocational choice. In the foreward to their book, they expressed their doubts as to whether significant assistance can be given a young person planning his future without helping him to "clarify his values and find his identity."³ The young person who is trying to make a vocational choice is an adolescent. The authors feel that the deep-seated emotional experiences which a person undergoes at this time of his life obscure his basic needs and desires. Thus, vocational decisions are demanded at a time when he is ill-fitted to make them.

The research team reviewed earlier theories of vocational choice, which they called "current theories". Because these theories seemed to be based on the assumption that the individual is passive, is forced into a choice by "accident" or by "impulse", they rejected them. They therefore set out to do an independent study of vocational choice.

¹Eli Ginzberg, W. S. Ginsburg, Sidney Axelrad and J. L. Herma, Occupational Choice: An Approach to a General Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951).

²D. C. Miller and W. H. Form, Industrial Sociology (New York: Harper, 1951).

³Ginzberg et al, op. cit., Forward p. ix.

They interviewed sixty-four students at Horace Mann-Lincoln School and Columbia University, both in New York City. The ages of the subjects ranged from eleven to twenty-four years, educational level, from sixth grade to graduate school. All of the students were reared in an urban environment, with parents in the upper middle income group. The interviews were highly structured.

The basic assumption of Ginzberg and his associates before conducting the study was that an individual never reaches the ultimate decision at a single moment in time, but through a series of decisions over a period of years. The determining factor in vocational choice is the cumulative impact of this series of decisions. Each step in the process has a meaningful relationship to those which precede and follow it.

Implied in this factor of cumulative determination of vocational choice is the concept for which Ginzberg is, perhaps, most well-known among theorists of vocational choice, irreversibility. By this characteristic of vocational decision he means that the actions following upon decisions made are more or less irrevocable. Once a decision is made on a vocation, the expense in dollars, time and emotions is too great to turn back and enter a new field. From this notion of irreversibility flows another quality of vocational choices, the compromise.

The decision concerning an occupational choice is, in the last analysis, a compromise whereby an individual hopes to gain the maximum degree of satisfaction out of his working life by pursuing a career in which he can make as much use as possible of his interests and capacities, in a situation which will satisfy as many of his values and goals as possible.¹

¹ Ginzberg et al., op. cit., p. 197.

After analyzing the data collected from the interviews, the authors described the process of vocational choice by means of three developmental periods. The period of latency and preadolescence--ages six through thirteen--they called the "fantasy-choice period". The period of adolescence--ages thirteen through eighteen--is named the "tentative-choice period". Young adulthood--age eighteen and older--is the vocational period of "realistic choice". The differentiating factor in each period was the way in which the young persons translated their impulses and needs into occupational choices.

In the fantasy choice period, according to Ginzberg's theory, the stress is on the process of choice more than the specific occupation selected. The child thinks about an occupation in terms of wishing to be an adult. The child wants "to be like" some significant adult and feels that he can be anything he wants to be. There seems to be an inability to perceive the relationship between means and ends. Thus, he is unrealistic about his capacities.

The transition from the fantasy choice to the tentative choice period is brought about by an increasing ability in the preadolescent to look at himself objectively. There is an increasing awareness of reality, of the fact that he will change with time, and that his present actions will affect his future. But this period is one of tentative choice because the adolescent is aware of the instability of most areas of his personality. His attitudes have changed from childhood. They will probably change even more in adulthood. The choices he makes, therefore, are consciously tentative. The new things he has learned about himself and others have already affected his thinking about "what he wants to become". He presumes that the things he will learn in the next few years

will also affect his vocational decision. The researchers noticed also that during this period there is a tendency in the adolescents to pretend, to themselves and others, that they are all settled in their choice and hesitate to reopen the question. The ability to overcome this hesitancy and revise their plans varies. This "comes to some people too late; a change may no longer be feasible or may be made only at great sacrifice".¹ This observation contributed to Ginzberg's conviction of the irreversibility that characterizes vocational decisions.

The tentative period was divided by the authors into four stages of vocational development: 1) the interest stage, ages eleven and twelve, 2) the capacity stage, ages thirteen and fourteen, 3) the value stage, ages fifteen and sixteen, and 4) the transition stage, age seventeen. In this period, thinking and planning for the future is no longer based on present satisfactions as in the fantasy period. It is based on what will most likely be satisfying in the future. But judgements about the future are still made in terms of subjective factors, as the names of the first three stages of this period indicate: interests, capacities, and values. As the young person nears the end of this period, which ordinarily coincides with the completion of high school, he recognizes the subjective nature of his previous decisions. Thus, the researchers found in students at this stage of transition to the period of realistic choices a "restrained suspense about the future"--an awareness that the decisions made during adolescence were tentative and must be tempered by reality.

¹Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

The third period, then, the period of realistic choice, is characterized by reality considerations. The individual begins to realize that he will have to work out a compromise between what he would like to be and what is realistically possible. This period is divided into three stages: (1) exploration, (2) crystallization, and (3) specification.

During the exploration stage, the college freshmen were found to be trying to acquire experiences needed to resolve their occupational choice. Their decision-making was characterized by a shift toward realism but there was still a subjective orientation. They were aware of the necessity of getting deeper insight into their needs and desires by means of new experiences. "The freshman discovers that college, instead of answering his questions, has added to them."¹ He needs more time, therefore, to explore: to absorb the new experiences and learning and to reevaluate the old. The increasing pressure to come to a decision, however, causes his thinking to focus in on a narrower range of vocational possibilities.

The second stage in the period of realistic choice, the authors have named the crystallization stage. "Crystallization", they write, "is the process whereby the individual is finally able to synthesize the many forces, internal and external, that have relevance for his decision."² He is able to make definite plans for the future. Even crystallized choices, however, are not always final. They are subject to reconsideration in the light of new experiences or reevaluation of old ones.

¹Ginzberg et al., op. cit., p. 105.

²Ibid., p. 107.

The final stage is called the specification stage. It is the stage in which the individual finds himself capable of closure, of committing himself to a specialized field of work. Two criteria are proposed as signs that an individual has reached this stage: (1) a willingness to specialize, and (2) resistance to deflection from the chosen course. Ginzberg maintains, however, that it is usually impossible to determine definitely a field of specialization within the formal school structure. Actual experience in the field of choice is needed.

The researchers sum up their theory of vocational choice as consisting of three basic elements: (1) vocational choice is a process; (2) the process is largely irreversible; and (3) compromise is an essential aspect of every choice. Occupational choice, then, is a developmental process taking place over a period of years; a process that is continuous, largely irreversible, and involves a compromise between one's abilities, interests, values, and opportunities.

Super and Associates

Although critical of certain aspects of the research procedure of Ginzberg and his associates and quick to point out that some of their conclusions were open to dispute, Donald E. Super and his associates adopted their developmental approach to vocational choice. "This research team", they write, "composed of an economist, a psychiatrist, a sociologist, and a psychologist, may be credited with effectively introducing the developmental approach to the study of vocational behavior."¹

¹Donald E. Super, Vocational Development: A Framework for Research (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), p. 11.

while the study of Ginzberg and his associates was a cross-sectional study of vocational choice, Super and his associates have embarked upon a longitudinal study to be completed about 1975, when the boys used as subjects reach the age of thirty-five. This longitudinal research project in vocational development is the Career Pattern Study for the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation. Super's theory of vocational development, therefore, is still in formation. However, a theory of vocational development can be derived from his numerous works already published.

Super's efforts to formulate an adequate theory have been made within a developmental frame of reference.

Making vocational decisions and adjusting vocationally are processes--that is, they are a series of related behaviors which change with time, generally in the direction of increasing complexity and greater specificity."¹

Super and his associates have chosen for their Career Pattern Study the classification of life stages by Charlotte Buehler, mentioned earlier in this report. "Although the data have serious limitations, the life stages described provide a logical and convenient framework for a discussion of vocational behavior and development."² They synthesized the life stages defined by previous researchers and subdivided the periods of growth and exploration.

The growth period is subdivided into three substages: (1) fantasy stage, ages four through ten, (2) interest stage, ages eleven and twelve,

¹D. E. Super and Phoebe Overstreet, The Vocational Maturity of Ninth Grade Boys (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 1.

²D. E. Super et al., Vocational Development: A Framework for Research (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), p. 37.

and (3) capacity stage, ages thirteen and fourteen. In the fantasy stage, Super maintains that vocational orientation in an individual is dominated by his needs. The child identifies with key persons in his family and at school by means of role-playing in fantasy. In the interest stage, likes are the major determinant of aspirations and activities. There is, however, increasing social participation and reality-testing. Hence, the adolescent, in the capacity stage, places more conscious consideration in his vocational planning on his abilities and the requirements of occupations.

The period of exploration is also subdivided into three sub-stages: (1) tentative stage, ages fifteen through seventeen, (2) transition stage, ages eighteen through twenty-one, and (3) trial stage, ages twenty-two through twenty-four. During this period of exploration, self-examination, role tryouts and occupational exploration take place in school, leisure activities and part-time work. In the tentative stage, needs, interests, capacities, values and opportunities are all considered. Tentative choices are made and tried out in fantasy, discussion, courses and work. In the transition stage, coming after the completion of high school, reality considerations are given more weight. Ordinarily, it is during this period that an individual gets a job or begins professional training. In the trial stage, the individual tries out, in the field he has chosen, the role he feels appropriate as his life work.

Super insists that the ages assigned to each stage are not fixed. He recognizes the possibility of individual variation. He regards vocational development as an "ongoing, continuous, generally irreversible process. It is a process which continues through time, and it is manifested in a sequence of vocational behaviors, occurring throughout the

life span of the individual...The direction of development generally cannot be reversed."¹

Super takes issue with Ginzberg's theory that the actual choice of an occupation is the result of a compromise between interest, aptitudes, values and external reality. He maintains that reality-testing begins early in life and that fantasy as an outlet for needs continues late in life. There is a series of inter-related decisions being made in an extended developmental process and he prefers to describe this series of decisions as leading to a synthesis, rather than a compromise.

Central to the developmental framework of Super's theory of vocational choice is the concept of developmental tasks. He accepts Havighurst's definition of a developmental task as:

. . . a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness in the individual, disapproval by society, and difficulty with later tasks.²

Development of vocational behavior is dependent upon and commensurate with development in other areas. "Important in the developmental task concept is the idea that successful achievement of earlier tasks is influential in determining the ease or difficulty with which later tasks are mastered."³ This concept of "vocational maturity" is important in Super's study of career development. The developmental frame of reference assumes that there is a certain growth in vocational

¹Super, Vocational Development, p. 42.

²R. J. Havighurst, Human Development and Education (New York: Longmans, Green, 1953), p.2.

³Super & Overstreet, The Vocational Maturity of Ninth Grade Boys, pp. 1-2.

behavior and readiness to make a choice. This growth in vocational behavior is evaluated by assessing the vocational maturity of an individual. Assessment can be made either by comparing the behavior of an individual with the behavior to be expected from one in his life stage as determined by his age or with the behavior of others dealing with the same developmental tasks as those with which the individual under consideration is dealing. Hence, there are two criteria of vocational maturity: Vocational Maturity I, which "focuses on life stages and is indicated by the actual life stage of an individual in relation to his expected life stage (based on his chronological age)" and Vocational Maturity II, which "focuses on developmental tasks and is represented by the behavior of the individual in handling the developmental tasks with which he is actually coping."¹

The concept of "vocational maturity" is analogous to that of reading readiness. There are certain stages of vocational development at which vocational planning is more effective, simply because the individual is "vocationally ready". Thus, in the authors' career pattern study of ninth grade boys, vocational maturity for boys at this age was found to consist in behavior in preparation for vocational choice, planning, and looking ahead. "In grade nine, vocational maturity is not characterizable as goal-attainment, as the having of consistent, realistic, preferences, nor as having begun to make a place for oneself in the world of work."² In another study, Super asks the question: "Is the making of long-range vocational choices possible at this stage of

¹Super, Vocational Development, p. 132.

²Super and Overstreet, Vocational Maturity of Ninth Grade Boys, p. 146.

adolescent development?" After studying the GATB scores of ninth and twelfth graders, he comes to the conclusion that:

. . . typical ninth grade boys in a typical small city high school with a typical guidance program, were at a stage of vocational development which is characterized by readiness to consider problems of prevocational and vocational choice, but also by a general lack of readiness to make vocational choices. Ninth graders are clearly in an exploratory stage, not in a decision-making stage, of vocational development.¹

This exploration, Super concluded, calls for a commitment in ninth graders to find out more about themselves and to inform themselves about the world of work, but he did not find them ready to commit themselves to pursuing a definite vocational choice.

In summary, Super maintains that the term "vocational choice" conveys a misleading notion of neatness and precision in time. "Choice is, in fact, a process rather than an event."² Because of this misleading connotation, he prefers to speak of "vocational development". He and his associates conceive of vocational development as one aspect of individual development.

Like other aspects of development, vocational development may be conceived of as beginning early in life and as proceeding along a curve until late in life...Just as general development can be broken down into major life stages placed sequentially on a continuum, each stage having characteristics which are peculiar to it and which justify singling it out, so the continuum of vocational development can be broken down into vocational life stages, each defined by its peculiar characteristics...The concept of vocational development leads logically to that of vocational maturity...the place reached on the continuum of vocational development, from exploration to decline.³

¹Super, D. E., "Ninth Grade: Vocational Choice or Exploration", Personnel and Guidance Journal, xxxix (1960), 106-109.

²Super, The Psychology of Careers, p. 184.

³Ibid., pp. 185-186.

SELF-CONCEPT THEORY

Implied by Super's concepts of vocational development and vocational maturity is the concept of the development and implementation of the self-concept. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that, in his efforts to relate career patterns to the individual, he provides the elements of what may be called the "self-concept theory" of vocational choice. In summarizing this theory for the purposes of this report, reference will also be made to psychologists who have studied the development of the self-concept in adolescence, in so far as their conclusions are relevant to vocational choice.

Donald Super

Super wrote: "The choice of an occupation is one of the points in life at which a young person is called upon to state rather explicitly his concept of himself, to say definitely 'I am this or that kind of person.'"¹ He described the elements of a self-concept theory of vocational development as formation, translation and implementation of the self-concept. By means of self-exploration and identification with significant adults, the child develops an image of himself as a person who is distinct from but similar to other persons in his environment. He discovers that certain kinds of behavior are pleasing to his parents and provide gratification; other behavior is displeasing and brings punishment. As his relationships with other persons expand, he tries out his ideas of himself on more and more persons. Those aspects of

¹Super, Psychology of Careers, p. 191.

his self-concept which bring satisfaction are retained. Those which do not are rejected. He is testing his concept of self against external reality.

Role-playing is an important element in the development of the self-concept. In the home and at school, the child observes various roles played by parents, teachers and peers. By trying out various roles, the child discovers which are acceptable to adults or peers and which bring satisfaction to himself. In the home, a great variety of activities are carried on by members of the child's family. By taking part in these activities, the child:

. . . finds out about the nature of work, observes that men do some things and women others, learns something about other places in which it is also done, finds out how well he likes it, and compares or hears his performances compared with those of others.¹

This trying out of roles Super sees as self-exploration. It is also vocational exploration.

The role that an individual can play in life is formed and developed in childhood through home and school experiences. Adolescence, then, becomes a period of exploring how to fit in with society and what modifications in the self-concept are necessary to bring it into line with reality. Super defined adolescence as "the process of finding out what constitutes adult behavior and of trying out various modes of adult behavior and of ascertaining which of these are both congenial to one's self and acceptable to one's associates".² This self-exploration

¹Super, Psychology of Careers, p. 84.

²Ibid., p. 80.

involves occupational exploration also. Super maintained that ordinarily an adolescent must pursue this process of self-exploration for some time before committing himself.

Even in the case of some well-motivated, clear-thinking, able high school seniors, interests and abilities are still in the process of developing or at least of coming to the surface of consciousness...Actual decision-making may not come for some time, and then it will turn out to be a step-by-step process rather than an event.¹

Self-understanding, so essential to vocational decision-making, is achieved with great difficulty. The changes taking place in the roles an adolescent must assume as he advances toward adulthood require time for assimilation.

When this process of self-exploration and translation of the self-concept into roles is completed, the individual is then prepared to make a choice which is, in effect, the implementation of his self-concept.

As a result of his discussion of a self-concept theory of vocational choice, Super proposed a redefinition of vocational guidance:

Vocational guidance is the process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of himself and of his role in the world of work, to test this concept against reality, and to convert it into a reality, with satisfaction to himself and benefit to society.²

E. H. Erikson

David V. Tiedeman and Robert P. O'Hara are currently working on another research project in vocational choice theory, the Harvard Series in Career Development. In a 1959 study of the "vocational self-concept

¹Super, Psychology of Careers, p. 99.

²Ibid., p. 197.

in adolescence" they stated "the process of occupational choice may be characterized as that of developing a vocational identity. The 'self' is the central concern of identity."¹ In a more recent essay they expanded on this relationship between the development of the self-concept and vocational identity: "Ego-identity is a psychosocial phenomenon... Career development includes the development of an orientation toward work that evolves in the psychosocial process of forming an ego-identity."² Their study utilized the structure formed by E. H. Erikson to describe the development of ego-identity and the life-cycle of man. It will be helpful, therefore, in reviewing their concept of vocational choice to review briefly some of the concepts proposed by Erikson. A complete summary of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is not necessary. Reference will be made only to those concepts which are relevant to the self-concept theory of vocational choice.

Erikson, who conceived of psychosocial personality development in a psychoanalytic frame of reference, stated his "epigenetic principle" as follows: "Identity appears as one concept within a wider conception of the human life-cycle which envisages childhood as a gradual unfolding of the personality through phase-specific psychosocial crises."³ The "identity crisis" in adolescence is only one of eight critical steps in

¹Robert P. O'Hara and David V. Tiedeman, "Vocational Self Concept in Adolescence", J. Counsel. Psychol., 6, 1959, 292-301.

²David V. Tiedeman and Robert P. O'Hara, Career Development: Choice and Adjustment (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1963), p. 4.

³E. H. Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle", Psychological Issues, I, (1959), p. 119.

the development of personality. Each stage of development has a specific criterion of relative psychosocial health or ill-health. He called them "crises" because he conceived of these stages as turning points or moments of decision between progress or regression. Each item of psychosocial strength is related to all the others and all depend on the proper development of each other. This formulation is reminiscent of Havighurst's concept of "developmental tasks" and Super's subsequent notion of "vocational maturity".

The phase most relevant to vocational development is the crisis of ego-identity in adolescence. However, since each stage and criterion of psychosocial development is related to and dependent on all the others, it is necessary to at least list all of the crises in order:¹

- I. Infancy: Trust versus Mistrust.
- II. Early Childhood: Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt.
- III. Play Age: Initiative versus Guilt.
- IV. School Age: Industry versus Inferiority.
- V. Adolescence: Identity versus Identity Diffusion.
- VI. Young Adulthood: Intimacy versus Isolation.
- VII. Adulthood: Generativity versus Self-Absorption.
- VIII. Senescence: Integrity versus Despair.

In Erikson's formulation, each "crisis" is to be resolved by the learning demanded of a person at that stage in the life-cycle before subsequent "crises" can be resolved satisfactorily.

"Identity", wrote Erikson, "is in a sense an outgrowth of all the stages; but the crucial period for its development to maturity comes

¹For further development on each stage see E. H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: W. W. Norton, Inc., 1950), pp. 161-234.

with the adolescent crisis."¹ Since it is during this period of adolescence, also, that the task of making a vocational choice is demanded of a young person, Erikson's ideas on what the "identity crisis" involves will be helpful in understanding the problem of vocational choice.

He defined ego-identity as "the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity (one's ego in the psychological sense) is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others."² He insisted that this is distinct from the mechanism of identification whereby a child uses imitating behavior to assure love and to avoid fear of rejection. "Identity formation begins where the usefulness of identifications ends."³ They do however have common roots: "identity includes all significant identifications but alters them to make a unique and reasonably coherent whole of them."⁴ It is not the sum of childhood identifications, but the integration of them into a new sense of continuity and sameness.

To accomplish this integration, to establish his ego-identity, Erikson maintained that an adolescent needs a "psychosocial moratorium" analogous to the latency period. The moratorium is "a period during which the individual, through free role experimentation, may find a niche in some section of his society which is firmly defined yet seems uniquely made for him."⁵ The adolescent "needs freedom to choose, but

¹E. H. Erikson, "Youth and the Life Cycle", Children, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Mar.-Apr., 1960), p. 46.

²Erikson, Psychological Issues I (1959), p. 89.

³Ibid., p. 113.

⁴Ibid., p. 113.

⁵Ibid., p. 111.

not so much freedom that he cannot, in fact, make a choice."¹ "Decisions, choices and most of all success in any direction bring to the fore conflicting identifications and threaten to narrow down the inventory of further tentative choices."² The choice of one role in society-- a career-- demands ego strength to repudiate others. The role that he chooses and, finally, commits himself to for life must be one that is comfortable to himself and acceptable to those whose opinion is important to him. Hence, the need for time and freedom to learn the possible roles and to "try them out" tentatively.

Since this report is concerned with the vocational choice of American youth in particular, it is also relevant to note Erikson's opinion that this crisis of identity varies in different individuals and societies as to duration and intensity. The increasing number of vocational possibilities and prolonged preparation required today in the United States has the effect of lengthening the gap between childhood and adulthood, of demanding a longer period of "role experimentation".

Tiedeman and O'Hara

Mention has already been made of the work of David V. Tiedeman and Robert P. O'Hara in the Harvard Series in Career Development. These researchers have recently published an essay on career development utilizing Erikson's framework of psychosocial development of ego-identity. They admitted that their essay was not a theory of career development. "Rather it is a concatenation of concepts that seem to be needed as primitive terms in a science of career development relating personality

¹Erikson, Children (1960), p. 47.

²Erikson, Psychological Issues I (1959), p. 124.

and career through the mechanisms of differentiation and integration."¹

They did not conceive of the problem of vocational choice as separate from the development of the self-concept or ego-identity. The two are "interpenetrating". "Career development is conceived as the process of fashioning a vocational identity through differentiation and integration of the personality as one confronts the problem of work in living."²

"Career development, then, is self development viewed in relation with choice, entry, and progress in educational and vocational pursuits."³

Accepting Erikson's structure of the eight critical steps in the development of a healthy psychosocial personality, Tiedeman and O'Hara recorded vocational counseling interviews and reflected on the effect that the success or failure of individuals in those critical stages had on their vocational development. Just as the formation of ego-identity in adolescence is a central idea in Erikson's life-stages, so in their concept of career development the formation of vocational identity was central. Although they did not speak specifically of a "psychosocial moratorium" in the formation of the vocational identity, they did speak of the need for vocational exploration and of the fact that entry into the world of work for the college-bound "is delayed and thus ensues the culturally induced moratorium on earlier development of ego-identity through career."⁴ Throughout their essay, they stressed the importance

¹Robert P. O'Hara and David V. Tiedeman, Career Development: Choice and Adjustment (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1963), Forward, p. iv.

²Tiedeman & O'Hara, op. cit., Forward, p. v.

³Ibid., p. 46.

⁴Ibid., p. 54.

for vocational choice of a young person knowing himself. "In relation to career development there are so many things one needs to know about one's self before we can learn what to do with them."¹ Thus, commenting on the vocational development of an eighth grade boy interviewed, they stated:

. . . although Erikson speaks of the need to settle on a vocational identity, it may be that for American middle-class boys the delimitation of an area of interest, within which the ultimate vocational identity will be formed, will be enough...Support for the lack of firm vocational identity appears to come from the environment in which everyone else is doing much the same thing and adults don't realistically expect any further vocational specification.²

Relevant to the problem of when a young person is capable of settling on a firm vocational identity is the study by these same researchers in 1959.³ They investigated, by means of a cross-sectional study of 1,021 boys in a Catholic high school in Boston, the ability of adolescents to evaluate their standing in the areas of aptitude, interests, social class and work values. They defined self-concept as "an individual's evaluation of himself".⁴ The purpose of the study was "to establish empirically the existence of clarification of self-concepts in areas of relevance to vocational choice...and to introduce more precise means of identifying and describing stages of occupational choice."⁵

¹Tiedeman & O'Hara, op. cit., p. 52.

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Robert P. O'Hara and David V. Tiedeman, "Vocational Self Concept in Adolescence", J. Counsel. Psychol., 6, 1959, 292-301.

⁴Ibid., p. 292.

⁵Ibid., p. 300.

The data from the study by Tiedeman and O'Hara clearly revealed that self-concepts in these vocationally relevant areas are clarified from the ninth to the twelfth grade. "Aptitude is relatively poorly perceived throughout grades nine to twelve, even by academically able boys."¹ They concluded that:

. . . the imbalance which resulted in one factor being the sole basis for choice is gradually redressed under the force of the always increasing clarification of vocationally relevant self-concepts, so that at the end of the tentative period all factors become constructive forces in the career development process.²

The "end of the tentative period" is conceived of as Ginzberg defined it, namely, age seventeen.

MOTIVATIONAL THEORY

As can be readily seen from the foregoing reviews of Career Pattern and Self-Concept Theories of vocational choice, there are elements in each theory of the influence of motivation in the process of making vocational decisions. Because, however, there are those researchers who have approached the problem of vocational choice primarily from a motivational frame of reference, it is necessary, for the sake of completeness, to include a brief review of this approach. Those who have developed this theory have done so by asking such questions as: Why do men work? What satisfaction accrues to them? What personal needs are satisfied by means of their vocational choice? They answer these questions, in general, by assuming that an individual chooses that vocation which satisfies or appears to satisfy conscious or unconscious needs.

¹Robert P. O'Hara and David V. Tiedeman, "Vocational Self Concept in Adolescence", J. Counsel. Psychol., 6, 1959, p. 300.

²Ibid., p. 299.

Anne Roe

Probably the chief proponent of motivational theory is Anne Roe.

In the preface to her work she states:

I have become more and more convinced that the role of the occupation in the life of the individual has much broader psychological importance than has generally been appreciated. I believe that psychological theory could profit greatly from study of the kinds of satisfactions that can be found in work... Within limits, occupational choice can be taken as a self-categorization, as an indication of at least some aspect of the self-image.¹

Roe has devised a two-way classification system which groups jobs by primary focus of activity and by the level of function within each occupational group. The purposes of this report, however, will be served by reviewing only her theory of jobs as a source of satisfaction of needs.

Roe defined occupation as "the major focus of a person's activities and usually of his thoughts".² Setting out to answer the question as to why men work, she stated her conviction, based on studies of morale in industry and of job satisfaction, that it is not true that men work just for money. "Much more is involved in and expected of a job than a pay check."³ Her conception of occupations as the means whereby a person satisfies many of his needs required, therefore, a theory of the basic needs of the man who chooses an occupation. "In order to understand the role of the occupation in the life of the individual, we must first have some understanding of the individual and his needs."⁴

¹Anne Roe, The Psychology of Occupations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1956), Preface, p. vi.

²Ibid., p. 3.

³Ibid., p. 23.

⁴Ibid.

Because Maslow's theory of personality is relevant to this approach in understanding vocational choice, Roe adopted his theory of the hierarchy of needs.¹ Maslow has arranged the basic needs of man in a hierarchy of prepotency:

1. Physiological needs.
2. Safety needs.
3. Need for belongingness and love.
4. Need for importance, respect, self-esteem, independence.
5. Need for information.
6. Need for understanding.
7. Need for beauty.
8. Need for self-actualization.

He maintained that a man who is not satisfied in his physiological needs for food and drink, will not be concerned about safety needs or the need for belongingness and love and so on. The needs are in a hierarchy of prepotency--the lower needs must be satisfied before a man becomes aware of the higher. Thus, the best way to develop a life at a higher need level is through adequate satisfaction of lower needs. The needs as Maslow presented them are usually in this order. However, he did not exclude the fact that there will be individual differences in the order and the strength of the needs. It is a sign of a healthy personality that these needs can be activating when they are appropriate and that his life is so organized that acceptable means of satisfaction are readily available.

¹A. H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper, 1954).

Applying Maslow's theory of personality to occupations, Roe stated: "In our society there is no single situation which is potentially so capable of giving some satisfaction at all levels of basic needs as is the occupation."¹ She then showed how she saw the needs listed by Maslow being satisfied by a man's occupation. The lower needs are obvious. Her remarks on the need for esteem are particularly of note:

Perhaps satisfaction of the need for esteem from self and others is most easily seen as a big part of the occupation... Entering upon an occupation is generally seen in our culture as a symbol of adulthood, and an indication that a young man or woman has reached a stage of some independence and freedom.²

After commenting on various other theories of vocational choice, Roe concluded: "It would seem that a satisfactory theory of vocational choice must depend on a better understanding of the origin of interests."³ Hence, in the concluding chapter of her book she proposed a theory of the origin of interests, which, she admitted, "is susceptible to check at many points".⁴ She proposed that, although genetic elements play a part in the individual differences in capacities, interests, abilities and drives, the role of experience is particularly crucial. She suggested two alternative hypotheses:⁵ "1) The forms in which drives find their first satisfactions will later be expressed as dominant interests, or 2) drives which are most effectively frustrated will be the ones which will later become dominant motivators."⁵ Particularly relevant to the

¹Roe, op. cit., p. 31.

²Ibid., p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 270.

⁴Ibid., p. 318.

⁵Ibid., p. 319.

discussion of the age of vocational choice was her remark: "Individual differences in interests are also related to the timing of the emergence of basic needs and to the specific environment at that stage."¹

One final quote from Anne Roe pointed out what already has been noted, that some elements of each theory of vocational choice are present in all of them:

It has become abundantly clear that the problem of occupational adjustment is not merely one of matching aptitudes (although this is not excluded), but that it is as complicated as life adjustment, of which it is only a facet.²

John Holland

John Holland's theory of vocational choice seemed to include elements of pattern, self-concept, and motivation theories. A brief summary will suffice. He wrote his theory of vocational choice "to organize what we know about vocational behavior and to suggest some ways for investigating vocational problems and acquiring new knowledge".³

He summarized his theory as follows: (1) People can be characterized by their resemblance to one or more personality types. The six personality types are: realistic, intellectual, social, conventional, enterprising and artistic. (2) The environments in which people live can be characterized by their resemblance to one or more model environments. These, too, are six: realistic, social, conventional, enterprising and artistic. (3) "People search for environments and vocations that will permit them to exercise their skills and abilities to express

¹Roe, op. cit., p. 319.

²Ibid., p. 314.

³John L. Holland, The Psychology of Vocational Choice, Waltheim, Mass., Blaisdell Publ. Co., 1966, p. 9.

their attitudes and values, to take on agreeable problems and roles, and to avoid disagreeable ones...The person's search for environments is carried on in many ways, at several levels of consciousness, and over a long period of time."¹

Holland concluded his study: "Like most psychological theories, the present one will require extensive investigation to determine its general usefulness."² Because its usefulness has not yet been investigated, only a brief summary of his theory has been presented here.

III. RELIGIOUS VOCATIONAL CHOICE IN THE LIGHT OF THEORIES REVIEWED

Relevance of Psychology of Vocational Choice to Religious Vocation

Although every choice to serve God in the Church undoubtedly has theological implications, this report did not purport to examine the theology of religious vocational choice. Because, however, those implications are present and because theologians have studied the question of vocation, before attempting to apply the theories reviewed to religious vocational choice, something must be said concerning the theologians' view of vocation.

Taking their lead from the etymology of the word vocation ("vocatio": a calling), theologians speak of a special call from God, inviting an individual to a life of holiness and special service in the Church. After reviewing other theories proposed by theologians, C. A. Schleck accepted the following definition of a religious vocation:

¹Holland, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

²*Ibid.*, p. 96.

"a vocation is a call that God addresses to a person in the form of special grace that moves or inclines him to embrace the life to which he is called."¹

To discuss whether a religious vocation takes its origin in a special "call" from God and is therefore specifically different from the vocation of those who choose other vocations is a theological matter and thus beyond the scope of this report. The matter under consideration here is the response of the individual to that "call", vocational choice. Even though the desire to serve God through a religious role in the Church may be supernatural in origin, that is, by a special grace from God, the response to that "calling" is a human choice. Studies and research on the human process of choosing and following a vocation are relevant.

Writing about vocational psychology, J. F. Kinnane addressed himself to this question of the relevance of the findings of psychology to the theology of religious vocational choice:

Fears have been voiced about the introduction of modern psychology into the domain of religious life with its basic supernatural overtones...Recent attempts to define and delimit the role of psychology indicate that there need be no disharmony between modern psychological science and the Theology of Grace as they apply to the area of religious vocation...

It is particularly in the broader area of vocational choice and development that modern psychology can provide sound concepts that go far to explain the natural aspects of vocational choice in the religious sphere.²

¹C. A. Schleck, "Vocation, Religious and Clerical", New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1967), p. 735.

²J. F. Kinnane, "Vocational Psychology", New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1967), p. 739.

In the article cited above, writing about the signs whereby the presence of a religious vocation can be discerned, Schleck spoke of the need for a "right intention or proper motivation" in the individual who is called to a religious vocation:

The intention demands the proper knowledge of the vocation commensurate with one's capacity and age, full freedom to make a choice in its regard, and the efficacious will to pursue the good. Thus, a velleity or an imperfect willing, or a mere complacency in the goodness of the vocation, is not enough.¹

The "right intention" of which C. A. Schleck wrote includes the elements in vocational choice which have been the subject of study and research by theorists, sc. "proper knowledge of the vocation commensurate with one's capacity and age, full freedom to make a choice and the efficacious will to pursue the good".² It will be helpful, then, to examine the methods of recruiting, counseling and training for religious vocational commitment in the Catholic Church in the light of the findings of psychologists.

Procedure

In this section of the report, the procedure followed was to examine the ways in which the foregoing theories can be applied to the minor seminary approach to recruitment and development of young men for the priesthood in the Catholic Church. In this context, the questions asked were: 1) What are the important characteristics of the person who is making this decision? 2) What is involved in the decision he is making? 3) What do the theories reviewed indicate about this kind of

¹C. A. Schleck, loc. cit.

²C. A. Schleck, loc. cit.

person making this kind of decision? The emphasis was on the age of the person making the decision; more specifically, on what kind of commitment was expected of a person at that age in the light of the theories reviewed.

Who is Making the Decision?

It is a common practice in the Catholic Church (although not completely accepted today) to recruit boys to begin their preparation for the priesthood at the ninth grade level. In practice, because of the necessity of early decision on a high school, this involves the necessity of a boy making his decision about entering the minor seminary while he is still in the eighth grade. Hence, it is a boy, fourteen years of age (sometimes thirteen), who is expected to make this decision.

What is Involved in the Decision?

As stated earlier, policies vary a great deal, and practices even more, in regard to the firmness of commitment to the choice of the priesthood demanded of these eighth grade applicants. However, in the manner of a "least common denominator", it may be said that minor seminaries do not accept applicants who do not intend to become priests. Although the administrators or acceptance committee of a minor seminary realize a boy "cannot be sure" at this age, they do ask this boy to commit himself at least to choosing a high school whose primary purpose is to prepare him to be a priest. They ask him to make the commitment that is implied in choosing a school that is different from the ones chosen by his classmates who do not want to become priests. They ask him to commit himself to measuring up to the criteria of that school, which

are those that are expected of future priests. Since becoming a priest in the Catholic Church today also means remaining unmarried, a significant element in the criteria to which a boy must measure up is that of regulating, in varying degrees of "strictness", his heterosexual relationships--of living as one who has decided that marriage is not part of his future. Lack of desire or ability to measure up to these criteria is taken as a sign that the boy does not have a vocation to the priesthood. He is advised to transfer to a "regular" high school. In this advice, it would seem, a negative vocational decision is implied, "I am not going to become a priest."

Application of Theories of Vocational Choice

Career Pattern Theory. Ginzberg and his associates and Super studied the development of vocational maturity in a framework of "life stages". Ginzberg by a cross-sectional study and Super by a longitudinal study attempted to provide empirical support for their theories of vocational development as a patterned process. They described the problems encountered at various stages in vocational development, and insisted that vocational development or maturity was commensurate with personality development or maturity. Thus Super placed vocational development within the framework of developmental tasks which coincided with each stage in an individual's life, as suggested by Havighurst.

At what "stage" of vocational development, then, is the eighth or ninth grade boy who is making the decision that "he wants to go to the minor seminary"? In Ginzberg's theory, this boy, allowing for individual variations, will be at the end of the fantasy choice period or

in the interest stage of the tentative choice period. In the fantasy period, Ginzberg found boys thinking about their future vocational choice in unrealistic terms of simply "wanting to be an adult". If an eighth grade boy decides he wants to be a priest, therefore, it seems likely that he may be thinking more in terms of wanting "to be like" a priest whom he knows and admires. In the transition from the fantasy period to the tentative period, at approximately age fourteen, Ginzberg found boys increasingly aware that they had changed and would change a great deal more. This awareness of the tentative nature of vocational decisions made at this time would seem to indicate that a boy is ill-fitted to make the kind of commitment involved in "signing up" for a school whose primary purpose is to prepare him for a specific vocation, the priesthood. If, however, a boy has made this decision out of fantasy and, subsequently, during the ninth or tenth grade feels the need to reevaluate that decision on the basis of changes he finds in himself, is he free to reevaluate? Or is he not, rather, in a position in which, in order to acquire the freedom to evaluate his choice, he must make the negative commitment: "I have changed my mind. I do not want to become a priest"?

Ginzberg also noticed in adolescents in the tentative period a tendency, for the sake of security and acceptance by "significant others", to pretend that their decision was not tentative, but that they were all settled. He noticed a hesitancy to reopen the question of vocational commitment. Some were unable to revise their plans and forced to stay with a decision previously made. It would seem that the self-esteem provided a boy who has decided on a respected vocation, the priesthood,

and the admiration thus gained from "significant others" would heighten the difficulty to stop pretending he is all settled and to reopen the question of his vocation.

Ginzberg also found that students in transition from the tentative period to the period of realistic choices--ordinarily at the completion of high school--has a "restrained suspense about the future". They were quite aware that decisions made during adolescence were, indeed, tentative and must be tempered by reality. It would seem that, as a boy finishes high school in a minor seminary, he will face a critical stage of questioning, perhaps regretting, the decision he made unrealistically four years earlier. During the exploration stage of the realistic period, early college years, Ginzberg noted a strongly felt need in students to acquire more varied experiences to give them insight into their needs and desires. Thus, at a time when the seminarian is expected to be even more firmly committed to his choice of the priesthood, he may find himself wanting freedom to experiment more than before. This would seem especially true in the case of seminaries whose policy it is to deny some of the normal freedoms enjoyed by high school students. Ginzberg's remark that "the freshman discovers that college, instead of answering his questions, has added to them",¹ seems especially significant in regard to these students who come from the environment of change and reevaluation that so characterizes American society today. This time in a young man's life is, then, a time of exploration: a time to absorb the new experiences and learning and to reevaluate the old. A boy who

¹Ginzberg et al., op. cit., p. 105.

has made the decision to enter the seminary at the ninth grade is not free at the college level to acquire the new and varied experiences and to reevaluate his vocational plans.

Ginzberg also expressed his opinion that it is usually impossible to complete the specialization stage, characterized by a willingness to specialize and a resistance to deflection from the chosen course, within the formal school structure. Actual experience in the field of choice is needed. This presents a particular problem for seminarians, who not only go from high school into college, but from college directly into the specialized study of theology. The finalization of their choice of the priesthood by perpetual commitment is demanded before leaving the school structure.

Super, as has been noted, is conducting a longitudinal study of vocational development. He has described career patterns in terms of stages of development of vocational maturity. He has reemphasized the notion that a young child thinks about his future in terms of identifying with key persons. What has been said above concerning boys identifying with a favorite priest to fill a need for self-esteem and love is applicable here.

The boy who decides to become a priest and enters a minor seminary is, in Super's framework, in the tentative stage of the exploratory period. He pointed out that he found the dominant elements in vocational planning during this stage to be subjective, namely, needs, interests, capacities and values. It is only during the transition stage, after the completion of high school, that reality considerations are given more weight. He found that young men were trying out chosen roles as

late as age twenty-four. Thus, it would seem that a boy who decides to enter a minor seminary at the ninth grade level will, at best, be making the decision on dominantly subjective grounds at a time in his life when he is not likely to know himself well enough to judge his constantly changing needs, interests, capacities and values.

Particularly significant are the conclusions of Super's research team on the vocational maturity of ninth grade boys. He has concluded that there are certain stages of vocational development at which vocational planning is more effective simply because an individual is vocationally ready. He found that ninth grade boys were ready to be helped in thinking and planning for their future vocational choice, but were characterized by "a general lack of readiness to make vocational choices".¹ They were not in a decision-making stage. He suggested that ninth grade boys should be encouraged to find out more about themselves and to become more informed about vocational possibilities, but not to make a definite choice. The minor seminary approach to the recruitment and development of vocations to the priesthood seems contrary to this finding, because it is directed too exclusively toward making a definite vocational choice rather than helping boys to become informed about the many possible choices open to them.

In conclusion, and in transition to considering the implications of the self-concept theory of vocational choice to the minor seminary approach, Ginzberg's reflection that significant assistance cannot be

¹Super, D. E., "Ninth Grade: Vocational Choice or Exploration?", Personnel and Guidance Journal, XXXIX (1960), p. 109.

given a young person planning his future without helping him to "clarify his values and find his identity"¹ is applicable to ninth grade choice of the priesthood as a vocation. An adolescent's values and identity, as well as his needs and desires, are obscured by the emotional imbalance he finds in himself at this age. "He realizes vaguely that no aspect of his personality is stable during this period of rapid development, and yet the foundation for his choice must have a basic stability."² It would seem that asking a ninth grade boy to make a vocational decision is to ask him to have already clarified his values and established his identity at a time when he is emotionally incapable of doing so. He needs more time to acquire the basic stability which such a decision demands. To be encouraged to pretend that he has acquired that stability may make it impossible to reopen the question in the future.

Self-Concept Theory. Donald Super has envisioned vocational choice as the implementation of the self-concept. In choosing a vocation a young person is called upon to say "I am this or that kind of person".³ This is a reiteration of the opinion expressed by Ginzberg in the preceding paragraph. Thus, for a ninth grade boy to decide to enter a minor seminary is equivalent to his saying, "I am the kind of person who will be happy and successful as a priest." He is called upon to make this judgement at a time in his life when he is not capable of saying what

¹Ginzberg et al., op. cit., Forward, p. ix.

²Ibid., p. 66.

³Donald E. Super, The Psychology of Careers (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), p. 191.

kind of person he is and, probably, what kind of person can be happy and successful as a priest.

Super theorized that a child's self-concept is formed by adopting behaviors which please key persons in his life. In adolescence, he tries out roles which are congenial to himself and acceptable to the society in which he lives. Super concluded that this exploration must take place over a period of some time before a vocational decision is made. He found in his research that even some "well-motivated, clear thinking, able high school seniors" were not prepared to do any actual decision making.¹ Two questions concerning minor seminaries are again raised: (1) does a boy's choice of the priesthood at this age come from a need to please "significant others"?, and (2) does the commitment implied in entering the seminary at this age limit the needed exploration? It would seem that both questions should be answered in the affirmative.

As noted, Super has proposed a redefinition of vocational guidance. Since the minor seminary is presumably intended to guide a boy in his vocational choice, it should, in Super's opinion, help him "to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of himself and of his role in the world of work, to test this concept against reality, and to convert it into a reality, with satisfaction to himself and benefit to society."²

In E. H. Erikson's life-cycle of the development of a healthy psychosocial personality, each "crisis" is related to all the others

¹Super, Psychology of Careers, p. 80.

²Ibid., p. 197.

and all depend on the proper development of the others. The question to be asked concerning the minor seminary approach, therefore, seems to be: does the commitment required in entering a minor seminary allow for the resolution of the "identity crisis" in adolescence? Only if this is accomplished, will the subsequent crises of young adulthood and adulthood be resolved.

Identity formation involves the altering of childhood identifications and integrating them into a new sense of continuity and sameness. In the case of the ninth grade boy, the differentiating between his childhood identification with his father and the establishment of his own independent male identity is of great importance. Applied to ninth grade boys who have chosen the priesthood as their vocation, it would seem that this differentiation from identification with his father and integration of a new sense of male identity would be made difficult on two scores: (1) the boy has chosen a celibate role, thus denying himself heterosexual companionships which seem to be important in the formation of male identity, and, (2) often the boy in the seminary is separated from his family for substantial periods of time, thus making it difficult to try out his independence from his father and making more likely his simply transferring his childhood identification with his father to a new "father", namely, his superior in the seminary.

To establish his ego-identity, the adolescent needs, according to Erikson, a "psychosocial moratorium", that is, a period of "free role experimentation". This is a time during which the adolescent is allowed to be uncommitted so that he can experiment with various roles, to learn them and "try them out". The role that he finally commits himself to

must be one that is comfortable to himself and acceptable to those whose opinion is important to him. It would seem that a ninth grade adolescent has not had enough time to experiment freely with various roles, does not have enough self-knowledge to decide which role will be comfortable for him, and is not in a position to know whose opinion will be important to him in the future. Erikson suggested further that the choice of a role in society demands ego-strength to repudiate others. It is questionable whether a fourteen year old will have the experience or ego-strength to repudiate other roles. His opinion that the "psycho-social moratorium" needed by adolescents in present-day American society has been lengthened would seem to emphasize even more the weakness of the minor seminary approach to recruitment and development of vocations to the priesthood.

Tiedeman and O'Hara, as noted, applied Erikson's personality theory to vocational development. Through research, they confirmed the opinion that the problems and needs of the "identity crisis" in personality development are also those of vocational development. Thus, they spoke of a "culturally induced moratorium" in vocational development for the college-bound. They seemed to imply what Ginzberg made explicit, namely that establishment of vocational identity will not be possible until actual experience is gained. They reemphasized the need for self-knowledge as a prerequisite for vocational commitment. And they expressed the opinion that the cultural environment in the United States today gives support for lack of firm vocational identity in adolescence and that "adults don't realistically expect any further specification".¹ Thus,

¹Robert P. O'Hara and David V. Tiedeman, Career Development: Choice and Adjustment (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1963), p. 20.

application of their research to minor seminaries, would seem to warrant the conclusion that ninth grade boys do not have enough actual experience and self-knowledge to form the vocational identity required by the decision to enter the seminary and that it is unrealistic for adults to expect, in our culture, this degree of specification of vocational identity.

Tiedeman and O'Hara's study of ninth to twelfth grade boys revealed a change in self-concepts in the vocationally relevant areas of aptitude, interests, social class and values in the course of the boy's high school development. They found an imbalance in the boys at different levels of development which caused choices to be made on the basis of one factor. There was a gradual leveling off of this unbalanced emphasis of the one factor. This leads to the question: does a boy who chooses the priesthood at the ninth grade level do so because of a similar imbalance? Is the choice of the priesthood at this age due to the disproportionate strength of some need--a need which may become less dominant with an increase in experience and self-knowledge and the development of other needs? The discussion of needs filled by vocational choice suggests a motivational theory of vocational choice.

Motivational Theory. Those theorists of vocational choice who emphasize the motivation behind an individual's vocational choice maintain that the choice is made to satisfy conscious or unconscious needs. No attempt will be made here to specify the needs which motivate a person to choose the priesthood as his vocation. The primary concern is the age at which the choice is made. Assuming that Anne Roe is correct in attributing to needs a primary role in the process of vocational choice, the question to

be asked is: are the needs which motivate a ninth grade boy to decide to enter the minor seminary stable enough to justify the specification of commitment required of a minor seminarian? It would seem that the strength of these needs will change rapidly during adolescence and that the adolescent will become aware of other ways of filling the needs which motivated him to make his vocational choice. It would seem possible, for example, that a boy who is from an environment in which a priest is held in great respect and esteem, might choose the priesthood as a means of filling the need for respect and self-esteem. The widening of experience and growth in self-knowledge which are normal concomitants of adolescence may later reveal other needs and other ways of filling the need for respect and esteem. This seems especially likely if Maslow's hypothesis is correct that the fulfillment of needs of the lower order make a person more aware of needs of a higher order.

Anne Roe suggests that it is a sign of a healthy personality that a person's life is so organized that acceptable means of satisfying needs when they are felt are readily available. This raises the question of an adolescent's choosing the celibate life. If this choice involves deliberate curtailment of normal heterosexual companionship at a time in his life when the need for them is strong, it is questionable whether this will be conducive to healthy personality development. In this context, her suggestion that "individual differences in interests are related to the timing of the emergence of basic needs and to specific environment at that stage"¹ is relevant. At age fourteen, ninth grade, the strength of

¹Anne Roe, The Psychology of Occupations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1956), p. 319.

the need for heterosexual companionship varies a great deal. If the need emerges in a seminary environment it would seem to be crucial for future development of the boy's personality. This would be particularly significant if her hypothesis is true that "drives which are most effectively frustrated will be the ones which will later become dominant motivators."¹

John Holland's theory of matching "personality types" with "model environments" raises the question of whether a boy in the ninth grade is capable of knowing his personality well enough that he can settle on the vocation to the priesthood as the environment and vocation that will permit him to "exercise his skills and abilities to express his attitudes and values."² According to Holland, this search for an environment must be carried on "in many ways, at several levels of consciousness, and over a long period of time."³ It would seem that the commitment required of a boy entering a minor seminary at age fourteen limits this search considerably.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report was to study the minor seminary approach to preparation for and commitment to a religious vocation in the Catholic Church in the light of some current theories of vocational development.

¹Roe, The Psychology of Occupations, p. 319.

²John L. Holland, The Psychology of Vocational Choice (Waltham, Mass., Blaisdell Publ. Co., 1966), p. 12.

³Ibid.

Some current theories were reviewed under the three-fold classification: career pattern theory, self-concept theory and motivational theory.

Career pattern theory, based on the idea that vocational development, like personality development, can be envisioned as major life stages placed sequentially on a continuum, each defined by its peculiar characteristics, is represented by the studies of two research teams: Eli Ginzberg and his associates and Donald Super and his research team.

Super's research presented another approach to the problem of vocational choice--self-concept theory. According to this theory, vocational choice is the implementation of a self-concept and the establishment of a vocational identity. In this context, ego-identity in E. H. Erikson's life-cycle of psychosocial development and O'Hara and Tiedeman's research on vocational identity were also reviewed.

Motivational theory, which proposed that individuals choose vocations which satisfy or appear to satisfy conscious or unconscious needs, is represented by Anne Roe's work. Although it is questionable whether John Holland's formulation of vocational choice as a search for an environment which will be congenial to an individual's "personality type" would be classified by him as motivational theory, the theory was reviewed, in this report, under that heading.

Since choice of a religious vocation is not different, so far as the process of choosing is concerned, from choice of other vocations, the theories reviewed were applied to the system of preparation for and commitment to a religious vocation in the Catholic Church. The minor seminary approach to recruitment and development of priestly vocations, that is, the practice in the Catholic Church of ninth grade boys attending

a school whose primary purpose and program is to prepare them to become priests, was considered from the point of view of each of the theories reviewed. This was done by considering (1) the age level of the person who is making a vocational decision, (2) the nature of the commitment involved in entering and attending a minor seminary, and (3) the implications of the theories of vocational choice reviewed concerning a person at this age level making this kind of a commitment. It was found that boys at this stage of vocational development and knowledge of self would not, according to the theories reviewed, be ready to make this kind of a commitment. The theories also suggested that this kind of vocational commitment at this age could give rise to difficulties in specifying vocational choice in young adulthood.

It was found that, according to career pattern theory of vocational choice, boys entering the minor seminary at the ninth grade level would be in either the fantasy or tentative choice stage of vocational development. A boy choosing the priesthood as his vocation at the fantasy stage would be likely, according to this theory, to be choosing it out of an unrealistic desire to be like an admired priest. In the tentative stage he would be likely to choose on dominantly subjective grounds, that is, according to needs, capacities, interests and values, which adolescents usually recognize as tentative. The awareness of change and the tentative nature of vocational decisions made during adolescence pointed out by this theory, indicated the probability of conflict for the minor seminarian as, later in his high school career, he becomes aware of his needs for more experience and reevaluation of his vocational decision at a time when he will be expected to be more committed to the priesthood than when he entered the minor seminary.

Self-concept theory envisioned vocational choice as the implementation of the self-concept, the establishment of vocational identity. Applying this theory to the minor seminary approach to priestly vocations, it seemed that minor seminarians would probably be unable to have sufficiently formed a self-concept or identity at the ninth grade level to implement it in a vocational choice. Erikson's conviction of the need for a period of free role experimentation in adolescence suggested that minor seminarians have not had enough time nor freedom to experiment with roles to be able to decide on one which will be comfortable to themselves and acceptable to those whose opinion is important to them. The research of Tiedeman and O'Hara suggested that ninth grade boys do not know their aptitudes, interests, and values well enough to specify their vocational choice and that adults, therefore, do not realistically expect this specification. Applied to minor seminarians, this brought into question the degree of self-knowledge out of which a boy at the ninth grade level specifies his choice, the priesthood, and it raised the question as to whether it is realistic for adults to expect this kind of specification at that age.

Motivational theory, that is, the theory that vocational choice is made to satisfy needs, raised the issue of the changing nature and strength of needs during adolescence. It was suggested that if a ninth grade boy chooses the priesthood as a result of needs felt at that age, the strength of those needs and the possible ways of satisfying them may be seen differently as he progresses through adolescence and into adulthood. Particular relevance was seen in this theory to the need for heterosexual companionship, which is deliberately curtailed for minor

seminarians who have already decided upon a vocation which presumes a celibate life. John Holland's theory makes one raise the question as to whether a ninth grade boy has had enough time and experience to know his "personality type" or to find out if the priesthood will provide the congenial environment for him.

In summary, it may be said that, although no empirical proof has been found to show that the minor seminary approach to the recruitment and development of priestly vocations is an invalid approach, application of the theories of vocational choice reviewed finds this approach questionable and contrary to the findings of available research in the psychology of vocational choice.

CONCLUSIONS

All of the theorists reviewed in this report readily admit that their theories of vocational choice are in a tentative stage of development. They admit to limitation of sampling populations and predictive value. Thus, it can be said that there is no definitive proof, based on empirical evidence, that their theories are certain. However, the fact that they have formulated their theories on the basis of available empirical evidence and that they have agreed on so many aspects of vocational theory in spite of their differing approaches and psychological orientations, lends a great deal of credibility to their conclusions.

It has been mentioned earlier in this report that the minor seminary approach to recruitment and development of priestly vocations is being questioned by many in the Catholic Church today. It seems, therefore, that unless and until there is at least an equal amount of evidence contrary to these theories, it is unwise to ignore their conclusions.

Whether the ninth grade boy is said to be in the "fantasy or tentative choice period" of vocational development, or in the stage of "identity crisis", which demands a period of free role experimentation for its resolution, or in a time of constantly changing needs, all the theorists reviewed agreed that he is not in a position to make a specific vocational choice such as that of the priesthood. Even if minor seminary administrators insist--and there is no uniformity in this--that a minor seminary is intended merely to help a boy "find out" if he is called to the priesthood, the very purpose of the seminary narrows down the boy's vocational choice and excludes the freedom to explore other possible choices. It may be concluded from the theories reviewed that ninth grade boys should not be encouraged, much less persuaded, to make a vocational commitment. The decision to go to a school whose purpose is to prepare future priests and whose criteria for continuance is the measuring up to what is expected of future priests is, indeed, a vocational commitment. Hence, the conclusion must be that the minor seminary approach to vocational development should be abandoned.

In the light of the theories reviewed, religious vocational counseling should be directed principally at growth in self-knowledge. That which would distinguish religious vocational counseling would be the incorporation in a boy's plans for the future of the relevance of his religious convictions and motivation in choosing a vocation which will be satisfying to himself and of benefit to others. This, however, presumes time to integrate religious convictions with his self-concept and to acquaint himself with the many possible ways in which his religious convictions can be translated into vocational roles. Specification of the particular role in which he will translate his religious convictions can come only

after exploratory experience. Among the many possible vocations presented to Catholic adolescent boys, the priesthood should be included. Evaluation techniques, such as interest inventories, questionnaires and interviews, can help a boy know if it is realistic to include the priesthood as one of his possible choices. Information concerning the priesthood should be given him. Association with priests during adolescence will broaden his knowledge and provide some experience of the priestly role. This, however, should be offered him by way of vocational information, not persuasion.

The theories reviewed indicate a strongly felt need for a variety of experiences at the time a young man is entering college. It seems, therefore, that any commitment to the priesthood at this age should be clearly tentative. It should allow for the freedom to experiment with a variety of roles so as to provide a repertoire from which to specify a choice. Ginzberg and his research team, as well as O'Hara and Tiedeman, express their opinion that specification of vocational choice cannot be made while still in a school structure. This suggested to the writer that it would be advisable for young men who have tentatively chosen the priesthood to have an out-of-school moratorium before making a definite choice. This moratorium might possibly consist of a year of association with a priest in his work so as to provide actual experience in priestly vocation. Efforts that are presently being made to give seminarians "apostolic experience" seem to be in accord with this suggestion of the theorists.

One of the problems created by delaying commitment to the priesthood and by allowing freedom to experiment is the very real possibility

that a young man of this age, through normal heterosexual companionship, will find himself inclined toward marriage. This very real possibility leads one to the opinion that the choice of celibacy and the choice of a priestly vocation should be made separately. Study of the theories of vocational choice has made the writer strongly inclined to agree with those who feel that the choice of the priesthood should not exclude the possibility of marriage. Those curtailments of free role experimentation which have been made necessary to insure a commitment to celibacy seem to be in conflict with the conclusions concerning vocational development of the research that has been done by the authors reviewed.

Finally, it is recommended that the study of these and other theories of vocational choice influence the research and experimentation currently being done in the Catholic Church concerning the age at which vows are made in the religious life and the question of whether they should be made by perpetual commitment. The theories reviewed seem to suggest a minimum age of commitment, and raise valid questions concerning the advisability of an individual's making a decision to live by those vows the remainder of his or her life.

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THE MINOR SEMINARY APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS VOCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIGHT OF SOME CURRENT
THEORIES OF VOCATIONAL CHOICE

by

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The purpose of this report was to study the minor seminary approach to preparation for and commitment to a priestly vocation in the Catholic Church in the light of some current theories of vocational choice. Current theories were reviewed under the three-fold classification: career pattern theory, self-concept theory and motivational theory. Career pattern theory, based on the idea that vocational development, like personality development, can be envisioned as major life stages placed sequentially on a continuum, each defined by its peculiar characteristics, is represented by the studies of two research teams: Eli Ginzberg and Donald Super with their respective associates. Super's research presented an additional approach to the problem of vocational choice, the self-concept theory. According to this theory vocational choice is the implementation of a self-concept and the establishment of a vocational identity. The idea of ego-identity in E. H. Erikson's life-cycle of psychosocial personality development and O'Hara and Tiedeman's research on vocational identity were also reviewed under this heading. Motivational theory, which proposes that individuals choose vocations which satisfy or appear to satisfy conscious or unconscious needs, is represented by Anne Roe's work. Although it is questionable whether John Holland's formulation of vocational choice as a search for an environment which will be congenial to an individual's "personality type" would be classified by him as motivational theory, it was reviewed, in this report, under that heading.

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for and commitment to a religious vocation in the Catholic Church. The minor seminary approach to recruitment and development of priestly vocations, that is, the practice in the Catholic Church of ninth grade boys attending a school whose primary purpose and program is to prepare them to become priests, was considered from the point of view of each of the theories reviewed. This was done by considering (1) the age level of the person making the vocational decision, (2) the nature of the commitment involved in entering a minor seminary, and (3) the implications, in the light of the theories reviewed, of a person at this age level making this kind of a decision. It was found that boys at this stage of vocational development and knowledge of self would not, according to the theories reviewed, be ready to make this kind of commitment. The theories also suggested that this kind of vocational commitment at this age could give rise to difficulties in specifying vocational choice in young adulthood. Thus, although no empirical proof has been found to show that the minor seminary approach to vocational development is certainly invalid, application of these theories finds this approach questionable and contrary to the findings of the researchers. It was recommended that the study of these and other theories of vocational choice influence the research and experimentation currently being done in the Catholic Church concerning vows made in the religious life.